

ARIZONA WILLOW
(*Salix arizonica*)

STATUS: Formerly a candidate for Federal listing (57 FR 54747, 1992), species protected under a Conservation Agreement.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: A woody perennial shrub with a variable growth habit (up to 2.6 m (8.5 ft)), growing as a prostrate mat to a large hedge or forming thickets. The leaves are egg-shaped, 12.7 - 50 mm (.5 - 2 in) long, 6.3 - 25 mm (.25-1.0 in) wide, with fine-toothed margins. New branches are yellow-green. Previous years branches are bright red, and when present help distinguish this willow from other willow species in the area. Arizona willow blooms in early spring with male and female catkins produced on separate plants.

HABITAT: Grows along riparian corridors above 2,439 m (8,000 ft) elevation in unshaded or partially shaded wet meadows, streamsides, and cienegas. Plants are typically found in or adjacent to perennial water.

RANGE: Historic: Arizona willow may have occurred in the Burro Creek, Big Lake, and Crescent Lake areas, and possibly in the upper portion of Hayground Creek in the Apache National Forest, Apache County, Arizona.

Current: In Arizona, the willow is known from the vicinity of Mount Baldy, on Federal land managed by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests and on the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation in Apache County. A small amount of Arizona willow habitat occurs on private land.

REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: Degradation and loss of high elevation riparian habitat and direct loss of plants due to many factors, including; historic and present livestock grazing, water impoundments, recreation, road construction, elk grazing, timber harvesting in upper watersheds, fungal infection and establishment of exotic plant species. Some populations have experienced serious declines.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and private lands in Arizona. Also found on Forest Service land in New Mexico and Utah.

NOTES: In April 1995 a Conservation Agreement (available online at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov/>) between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Forest Service, and the National Park Service was finalized. The plan commits several Federal and State agencies to specific actions to immediately reduce site-specific threats, to provide long-term protection and habitat improvement, and to carry out proactive conservation actions. In addition, the White Mountain Apache Tribe has developed the "Arizona Willow Management Plan: An Interim Approach to High-Elevation Riparian and Cienega Ecosystem Management on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation" which is consistent with, and complementary to, the strategies and intent set forth in the Conservation Agreement. Subsequently, the species was removed from candidate status (60 FR 20951, April 28, 1995).

Protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law. Included on the list of Forest Service Sensitive Species for the Intermountain and Southwestern Regions.

Another common name for this species is manzanita willow, a name descriptive of the young red branches.